

Alden descendants 'autograph' quilt

Museum house guides sew the names on

By Kendra Johnson
The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — Descendants of John and Priscilla Alden have traveled from nearly as far away as their ancestors to visit the historic Alden House museum and sign fabric for a quilt that includes the names of more than 200 "Alden cousins."

Alden House guides dressed in period costume began adding the fan-shaped fabric pieces to the king-size blue and white quilt Saturday.

The Alden quilt was the brainchild of Erica Lee, a guide at the house museum.

"I figured this would be a good way to get the visitors a little more interested in the house," said Lee, 17.

During the summer, the student guides work on a project for the house under the guidance of curator Linda Ashley. In the past, one student learned to cane chairs and another wrote a biography of a preacher who is an Alden descendant.

"I want them to use their own interests to develop skills," Ashley said. "It's amazing how much they can accomplish when they set their minds to it."

Lee said she was inspired to make the quilt for her summer project by a quilting group at her church. Since May, Alden descendants who have visited the 1653 house have been asked to sign the fan pattern and list their city and the family member from whom they are descended. The "cousins" came from as far away as Billings, Mont., Tampa, Fla., and Dubuque, Iowa.

The quilt was bought for \$100 in August at an auction to benefit the house.

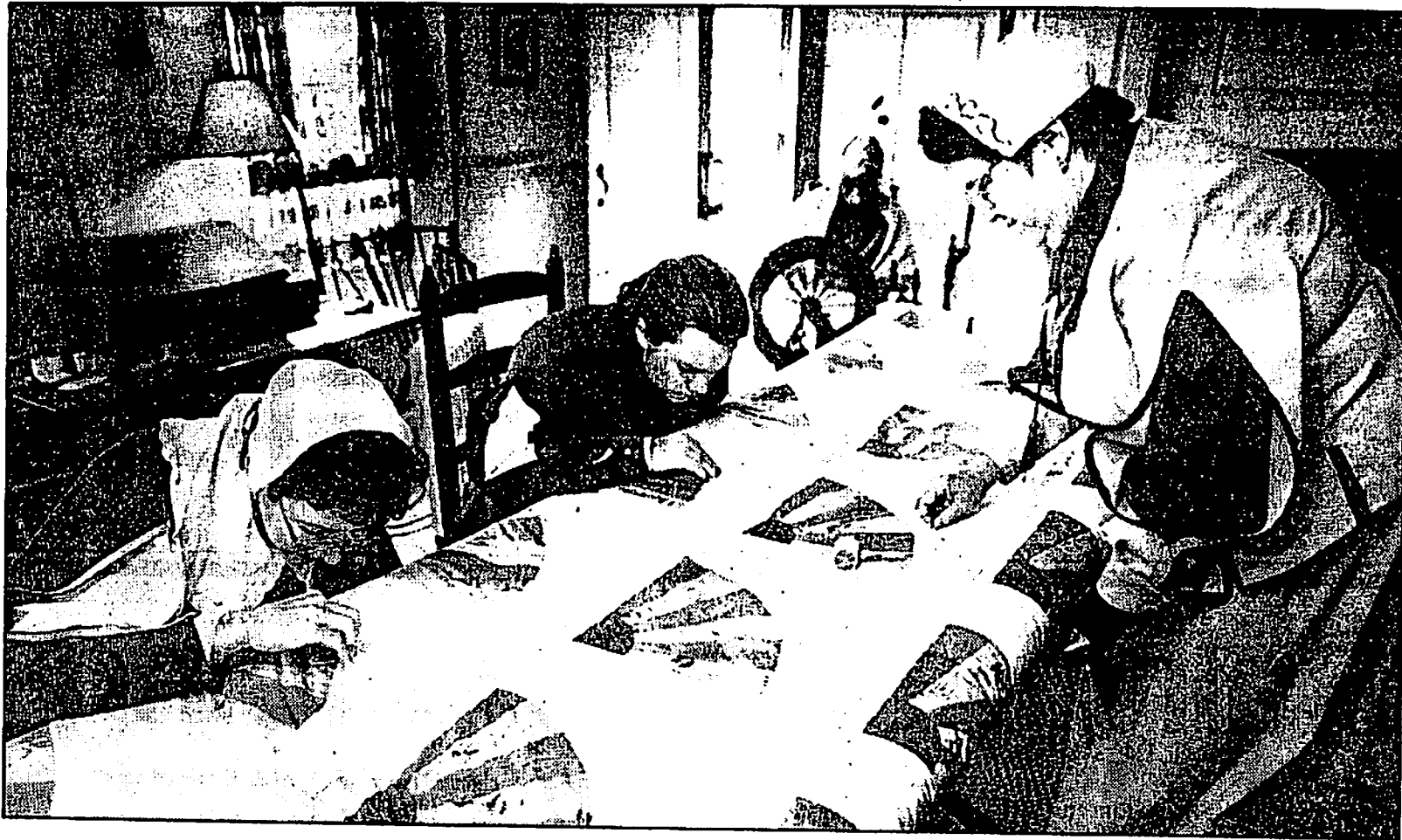
While the guides worked on the quilt, Alden descendant Catharine Cloud Kennedy spun wool on a wheel from the early 1700s. Cloud Kennedy, a carpenter at the Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, said she enjoyed her first visit to the home of her ancestors.

The Alden House closes for the winter Oct. 18.



Catharine Cloud Kennedy, a descendant of John Alden, spins wool on a spinning wheel from the early 1700s at the Alden House in Duxbury on Saturday.

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Gary Higgins photos/The Patriot Ledger

Quilt-makers with family ties to John Alden work on a quilt signed by Alden descendants in 40 states. The quilt was displayed at the Alden House in Duxbury. From left, wearing period costumes, are Bonnie Conant of Marshfield, Erica Lee of Duxbury and Linda Ashley of Marshfield.